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COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THREE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SIXTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 4 June 1990, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. JANKOWITSCH (Austria)

- Opening of the session
- Adoption of the agenda
- Statement by the Chairman
- Attendance by non-members of the Committee
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- General exchange of views

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

The CHAIRMAN: I declare open the thirty-third session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (A/AC.105/L.184 and Corr.1)

The agenda was adopted.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN: First, I should like to welcome all the old and new members of the Committee to the thirty-third session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. That welcome is, of course, cordially extended to the many governmental and non-governmental international organizations that, over the past years, have provided so much valuable service and co-operation to the Committee.

My remarks will briefly sum up at the outset some of the recent and most outstanding developments in the peaceful uses of outer space. I will also review the results of the 1990 sessions of our two Sub-Committees.

As representatives will have noticed, there has been in recent years a rather dramatic emergence of a new spirit of détente and understanding in international affairs, reflecting favourably on the Committee as well. As the climate of international affairs continues to improve, it is my hope that we might once again, at this year's session, profit from that new atmosphere, helped also by our customary spirit of understanding and compromise and our longstanding tradition of consensus and co-operation.

As to some of the recent events in outer space, representatives are aware that in April this year we observed the thirtieth anniversary of the launch of the first polar-orbiting meteorological satellite. That event signalled the beginning of the practical applications of space technology in our daily lives and of the

(The Chairman)

international sharing of satellite environmental data. Since then, space technology has given us unprecedented and still growing capabilities for global communications, weather forecasting, storm warning, and the development and management of natural resources. Space observations have also given us new insights into the global climate and the long-range effects of human activities on the environment. The extent to which space technology and applications now dominate ordinary human life can best be illustrated with two recent examples of those beneficial effects.

Thus, after the devastating earthquake in Armenia and the Ufa train accident in the Soviet Union, a unique medical space bridge was established to help the victims. From 4 May to 28 July last year, while we were meeting in New York, that space bridge provided communication links between facilities treating the victims and four United States medical centres through international and domestic satellites. Two or three centres were connected almost every day. There were 31 large teleconferences, each about four hours long, involving several hundred physicians. After discussions with United States consultants, Armenian physicians modified their diagnosis and treatment in approximately 25 per cent of the 210 patient consultations.

Based on that very successful experience, a permanent sub-group under the auspices of the United States-Soviet Union Joint Working Group on Space Biology and Medicine is to be established further to develop satellite telemedicine procedures and to find national or international organizations to continue the space bridge for earth-bound disasters.

Another example of recent uses of space technology is also from the field of telecommunications. As representatives are aware, with innovations in transmission and miniaturization, the costs of satellite terminals has fallen in the last few years from about $20,000 to approximately $4,000. Antennas as small as 15

(The Chairman)

centimetres wide are sufficient for communication through geostationary satellites. Consequently, not only can passengers of large ocean liners or major airlines make commercial public-satellite telephone calls, but that technology is also becoming available to truckers, small ships, light-aircraft operators and oil riggers. Two American companies are currently offering two-way satellite-messaging services to mobile terminals. By evaluating tests performed last year on 120 trucks, it was concluded that satellite messaging could cut 60 per cent from the cost of long-distance communications with drivers.

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(The Chairman)

More important, the drivers reduced the number of miles driven without paying loads by 0.5 per cent. Up to 50 trucking companies around Europe are participating in major Europe-wide trials of mobile satellite communications this year.

Since the Committee met last year there have been many accomplishments, some of them spectacular, in the field of outer space. Let me briefly mention a few of them.

In 1989 the Soviet Union orbited 95 satellites in 74 launches. These space objects included such well known ones as Cosmos, Corizont, Meteor, Molniya, Nedezhda, Photon, Raduga and the Resurs satellites. The orbital station Mir, after a short unoccupied period, is again serving as a base for manned space research. Besides regular transport spacecraft of the Soyuz-TM and Progress type, the large module Kvant-2 was docked with the main station block. This significantly increased the research capabilities of the Mir complex and made it possible to test a new personnel manoeuvring unit during extravehicular activities by Cosmonauts Viktorenko and Serebrov in February of this year.

In international co-operation, the Soviet Union launched the ninth Biocosmos recoverable satellite, the astrophysical observatory Granat-1 with instruments provided by France, Denmark and Bulgaria, and the geophysical satellite Intercosmos-24, with its Czechoslovak sub-satellite Magion-2. Further international projects are in preparation, including flights of astronauts from other countries to the Mir station.

The United States of America is continuing to use its Space Shuttle fleet on a regular basis. There were five flights with five-astronaut crews last year, and more are scheduled for this year. Highlights of the Shuttle programme include the successful recovery of the Long Duration Exposure Facility after five years and nine months in orbit. It is expected that results from the 57 experiments will

(The Chairman)

substantially improve our understanding of the space environment, in particular with respect to space debris and micrometeorites, a problem of considerable concern for many members of this Committee.

The successful deployment of the Hubble Space Telescope from Space Shuttle Discovery on 25 April of this year marks the beginning of a new era in astronomical research. This telescope, one of a series, as members are aware, which is a co-operative project with the European Space Agency (ESA), should for the next 15 years provide unique information about distant celestial objects such as quasars, galaxies and gaseous nebulae, as well as monitor atmospheric and surface phenomena on the planets in our solar system.

Fundamental new evidence concerning the origins and present state of the universe are certain to be found by astronomers using data from the unmanned Cosmic Background Explorer satellite launched in November and from the ASTRO observatory to be operated by the Shuttle astronauts this year. So this is an extremely exciting time for astronomers and planetary scientists. They have already received unprecedented data from the Voyager-2 encounter with Neptune in August last year and from the all-too-brief Phobos-2 observations of Mars and Phobos. Furthermore space scientists should expect a large flow of data from the Magellan space probe after its arrival into orbit around Venus in August this year and from the Galileo spacecraft during its six-year flight to Jupiter via Venus, Earth and possibly a few asteroids. Last but not least, with the launch of its lunar probe Hiten on 24 January of this year, Japan became the third nation to send a spacecraft towards the moon. This successful test of the swing-by technique is important for the future lunar and planetary missions to be undertaken by Japan.

The majority of spacecraft launched into space since the last session of our committee are devoted to practical applications of space technology:

(The Chairman)

communications, remote-sensing and meteorology. International co-operation is, I am glad to note, very extensive in this field, with many satellites being launched by State and commercial organizations for other users as well as for their own programmes. As a result, an increasing number of countries are directly involved in space activities by developing their own launching capabilities, by building, buying or leasing satellites, and by installing ground stations for use with national or international satellites.

The greatest share of international space launchings belongs to the company known as Arianespace. In eight launches last year and this year, it has successfully orbited 17 satellites for the ESA, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, INTELSAT, Japan, Sweden and the United Kingdom. After the failure of the Ariane launcher No. 36, on 22 February 1990, flights were suspended but they are expected to resume soon since the cause of the problem has apparently been found. We are all aware that research and development activities will inevitably have failures as well as successes and that through these failures science and technology can advance further.

On 7 April of this year, for the first time, China launched a foreign telecommunications satellite. That satellite, known as Asiasat, was built by the Hughes Aircraft Company and is owned by a Hong Kong-based consortium. Earlier we knew the satellite as Westar-6, and when first launched into space it failed to reach geostationary orbit and was recovered by a Space Shuttle in 1984. Another communications satellite recovered from low Earth orbit, again by Space Shuttle, was also launched for a second time on 13 April of this year. The satellite, called Palapa B-2R, serving Indonesia, was launched by an American commercial Delta-2 rocket.

(The Chairman)

Against this truly exciting background, I would now turn to the agenda items before the Committee.

As in past years, at its forty-fourth session the General Assembly gave us instructions to consider, as a matter of priority, the question of ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes. As members may recall, the Committee reached broader consensus on this item last year. I am hopeful that we can move even further in this direction to facilitate progress on spreading the benefits derived from space exploration to all countries.

Before going into detail on the work of our two Sub-Committees, I would offer our congratulations and deep gratitude to the Chairman of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, Professor John Carver of Australia, who has now completed his twentieth year as Chairman of that Sub-Committee. We are also indebted to the newest Chairman in our group, that of the Legal Sub-Committee, Mr. Vaclav Mikulka of Czechoslovakia, who through smooth and productive work greatly helped keep our Legal Sub-Committee functioning, particularly at its spring session of 1990.

As will be recalled with reference to the work of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, the expansion and reorientation of our United Nations Programme on Space Applications is an integral part, perhaps the central part, of the implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. We have therefore particularly focused on this aspect. The Sub-Committee has therefore continued its practice of combining consideration of these two items, keeping in mind the position of the General Assembly, which at its forty-fourth session again emphasized the urgency and importance of implementing the recommendations of UNISPACE-82. Once more the General Assembly identified urgent items for consideration by the Committee.

(The Chairman)

Thus, in accordance with resolution 44/46, the Sub-Committee reconvened its Working Group of the Whole to evaluate the implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82). I should like to congratulate the Working Group Chairman, Mr. Raimundo Gonzalez of Chile, on the excellent results of the work of his Group.

In its 1988 and 1989 reports the Working Group recommended that this Committee request all States, particularly those with major space or space-related capabilities, and international organizations with space-related activities to inform the Secretary-General annually, as appropriate, about those space activities that were or could be the subject of greater international co-operation. At this session the Working Group reiterated that recommendation, indicating that particular emphasis should be placed on the needs of developing countries.

The Working Group of the Whole also addressed several requests to the Outer Space Affairs Division for the preparation of documents related to space activities, including the following: a list of space technology experts, to be periodically updated; an annual report on the arrangements the Secretariat had made with other organs, bodies and organizations of the United Nations system fully to utilize available resources and to secure additional financial support from other sources for continued implementation of the Programme on Space Applications; a regularly updated report on the resources and technological capabilities of States in the field of space activities as well as on the capabilities of States in the areas of education, training, research and fellowship opportunities for the promotion of co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space; and a report on the economic aspects of the implementation of the recommendation in paragraph 9 (b) of General Assembly resolution 44/46 on the strengthening and expansion of data banks

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at the national and regional levels and the establishment, as proposed by UNISPACE 82, of an international space information service.

The Working Group, taking into account paragraph 9 (c) of the resolution, recommended that the United Nations lead an international effort to establish regional centres for space science and technology education in existing national and regional educational institutions in developing countries.

The Working Group further noted that in the case of priority studies recommended by UNISPACE 82 information from different reports should be integrated and new information should be compiled in order to provide Member States with comprehensive studies. Based upon the results obtained, the Working Group observed, a few specific studies should be carried out on such topics as

"(i) Integrated land and water resources management for rural development;

"(ii) Remote and rural area communications and broadcasting;

"(iii) Forest resources management" (A/AC.105/456, p. 32, para. 5)

to demonstrate the potential of space technology. The Working Group also suggested that some of those studies might be carried out as part of the United Nations activities for International Space Year.

Those are some of the recommendations made by that very productive Working Group. They continue to strengthen the basis for further progress in the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82. I should like to repeat, however, the remarks I made last year to the effect that information requested by the Working Group of the Whole, if it is to be useful, must be carefully considered. Reports and studies carried out provide a good basis for progress in the implementation process only if the Committee and its Member States, in particular, are prepared to act on them.

(The Chairman)

The Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, as in previous years, reviewed the wide range of activities of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and commended the work carried out during the past year. The Sub-Committee also approved or noted the activities proposed for this year and 1991.

While noting with appreciation that since its last session additional contributions had been offered by some Member States and organizations, the Sub-Committee this year continued - justly so, I believe - to express its concern over the small financial basis available for carrying out the Programme. It appealed to Member States once more to support the Programme through voluntary contributions. Let us hope that this appeal, which I gladly echo from the Chair, will not fall on deaf ears and that, considering the growing importance of space science and technology for the development process Member States and other donors will strongly support the efforts being made to strengthen the financial basis of our Programme.

I should like here also to draw the Committee's attention briefly to the question of co-ordination of space activities within the United Nations system as well as to the question of inter-agency co-operation. The Sub-Committee, in pointing out the role of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies as the focal point, the plaque tournante, so to speak, for the co-ordination of all space-related activities in the United Nations system, continued to stress the necessity of ensuring continuous and effective consultations and co-ordination in the field of outer space activities between organizations within our system to avoid duplication of effort.

Another important element of the work of the Committee and the United Nations itself in the next two years will be International Space Year (ISY), which should be held in 1992. The General Assembly has endorsed the Committee's recommendation

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that international co-operation should be promoted through ISY, which should be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all States, taking into particular account the needs of developing countries. The Sub-Committee also urged other Member States and international organizations to consider supporting additional scientific and technological activities in co-operation with the United Nations as part of ISY, and in this connection noted that it was particularly important to increase voluntary contributions for activities to be carried out during International Space Year, through the United Nations Programme on Space Applications.

The primary focus - and this is very important - of proposed activities during the Year was on the use of space technology for studying and monitoring the environment. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development is also planned to be held in 1992, in Brasilia. Therefore, the Sub-Committee has recommended that Member States, in planning their activities for the Year, should consider ways in which those activities could complement the efforts under way for that Conference.

Here I wish briefly to point to a specific aspect concerning the near-Earth environment which is gaining additional significance over the years. I refer to the challenges created by the phenomenon of space debris. An extraordinary variety of man-made objects has been injected into orbits around the Earth. Many are still intact units, but collisions between some others, as well as accidental and deliberate explosions of rocket components, have created a large number of fragments.

Space objects can therefore be divided into two categories: first, satellites which are active, under control; and, secondly, space debris - satellites and

(The Chairman)

mission-related objects, such as spent rockets, stages, fragments of disintegrated rockets and satellites, engine exhaust particles, paint flakes and the like. According to a periodic National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) satellite situation report, well over 7,000 known and trackable space objects are at present circling the Earth, and there are certainly several times as many that are too small to be detected with present technology. No more than about 350 are active satellites, while the rest do not fulfil any useful function. That means that in round figures only 5 per cent of the trackable objects are operational spacecraft; 20 per cent are non-operational satellites; 25 per cent are whole mission-related objects; and 50 per cent are fragments resulting from the breakup of satellites and boosters.

(The Chairman)

According to a list published in London a few years ago, there have been more than 17,000 space objects over that period. It is quite certain that this increasing population of orbiting objects is causing concern to the scientific community and others for a number of reasons: concern for the safety of manned space flights; accidental re-entry of space hardware; contamination by nuclear material in space and on the ground; damage to or loss of active satellites through collisions; debris proliferation through secondary collisions; crowding in the geostationary ring; interference with astronomical observations on the ground and in space; or interference with experiments in space. Space debris constitutes an unacceptable risk to man and material in space and on the ground and we know, of course, that little can be done about man-made objects and debris already in orbit. Man-made cleaning operations are beyond the capabilities of present technology. The only natural cleaning effect, the atmospheric drag enhanced by solar activity, cannot cope with all the debris generated in the course of space operations. All that can be done is to minimize collision risks and the future proliferation of debris by prevention measures at the planning stage. This might involve improved design and the avoidance of intentional and accidental explosions in space. Space hardware could be programmed to remove to extremely high disposal altitudes at the end of its working life or be propelled down into the atmosphere where it is burned up. But there is, of course, at the moment no international agreement, universal application or even a recommendation of such measures. I think it is only fair to bring this problem in all its dimensions before a committee that, sooner or later, might have to face some of the legal and technical challenges of an issue certainly linked to the further development of space research and applications.

(The Chairman)

In its consideration of remote sensing of the Earth by satellites, the Sub-Committee reiterated its view that remote sensing from outer space should be carried out, taking into account the need to provide appropriate and non-discriminatory assistance to meet the needs of the developing countries. Among other things, the Sub-Committee noted the importance of satellite remote sensing for monitoring and protecting the Earth's environment and, in particular, for studying and monitoring global climatic change. I do not need to emphasize the importance of this question. In fact, at its last session, the General Assembly recommended that more attention be paid to all aspects related to the protection and preservation of the outer-space environment, especially those potentially affecting the Earth's environment.

The Sub-Committee continued its consideration of the item "Use of nuclear power sources in outer space" and, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/46, reconvened the Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space. The report of the Working Group, which was ably chaired by Professor John Carver, is attached as annex III to the Sub-Committee's report (A/AC.105/456). I am pleased to inform members that the hard work and intense efforts of the Working Group have paid off and that, with its current report, the Working Group has successfully completed the elaboration of scientific and technical criteria for the safe use of nuclear power sources in outer space. The Working Group, after agreeing on the basic recommendation that the use of nuclear power sources in outer space should be restricted to those space missions which could not be operated by non-nuclear energy sources in a reasonable way, made a comprehensive set of recommendations under the headings "Design goals for radiation protection", "Nuclear reactors", and "Isotope generators". The Working Group also had an exchange of views on a number of other questions relating to the

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use of nuclear power sources in outer space. We should welcome these positive developments.

While recommending that the item be retained on a priority basis on its agenda for the next session, the Sub-Committee also recommended that the question of the reconvening of the Working Group should be considered by the Committee at this session in the light of the work which has been carried out by the Legal Sub-Committee on the subject at its twenty-ninth session. The Sub-Committee further recommended that this Committee consider the future work of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee on the use of nuclear power sources in outer space and the ways in which it affects the work of the Legal Sub-Committee, in particular on the agenda item on nuclear power sources in outer space. I look forward to hearing the views of members on these matters.

In reviewing the developments in the national and co-operative programmes in space transportation systems, the Sub-Committee continued to stress the importance of international co-operation in this field in providing all countries with access to the benefits of space science and technology. Regarding the questions relating to the physical nature and technical attributes of the geostationary orbit, as well as those relating to space communications development, I am afraid that I must once more record little progress. The Sub-Committee intends, however, to continue its consideration of these questions in the hope that some substantive movement can be achieved in the near future.

This was the fourth year that the Sub-Committee discussed, as agenda items, a number of scientific matters relating to life sciences, including space medicine, progress in the geosphere-biosphere (global change) programme, planetary exploration and astronomy. The official theme for the 1990 session was: "The use of space technology in terrestrial search and rescue and in disaster relief

(The Chairman)

activities". The Sub-Committee has recommended that the item previously entitled "Progress in the geosphere-biosphere (global change) programme" be changed to "Progress in national and international space activities related to the Earth environment, in particular progress in the geosphere-biosphere (global change) programme".

Once again, in this context, we wish to express our thanks and appreciation to the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) and the International Astronautical Federation (IAF) for the most interesting and informative symposium on the 1990 theme. The theme fixed for special attention at the 1991 session of the Sub-Committee is "Applications of airborne and satellite remote sensing for prospecting mineral and ground-water resources and for monitoring and managing biological resources, with emphasis on agriculture". The Sub-Committee has recommended that COSPAR and IAF be invited once more to arrange a symposium with as wide a participation as possible on this theme, as well as to present reports and arrange a special presentation on progress in the geosphere-biosphere (global change) programme.

Let me extend once again the gratitude of the Committee to these two international scientific organizations.

I turn now to the report (A/AC.105/457) of the Legal Sub-Committee, which indicates that significant progress was achieved during its twenty-ninth session held in Geneva. The Working Group on the Elaboration of Draft Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space, chaired by Mr. Hans Winkler of Austria, reconvened and recorded a consensus on a text for draft principle 3, guidelines and criteria for safe use.

On this principle, the Working Group agreed that the use of nuclear power sources should be restricted to those space missions which cannot be operated by non-nuclear sources in a reasonable way. For space missions that use nuclear power

(The Chairman)

sources, the Working Group agreed that international guidelines for radiological protection, including those of the International Commission on Radiological Protection, should be observed. With this consensus on draft principle 3, it should now be possible to come to an agreement on draft principle 2, which relates to the notification of the presence of nuclear power sources on board a space object, and draft principle 4, which relates to safety assessment. Perhaps this could even be achieved during this session of our Committee. Now that we are close to consensus on a full set of principles on nuclear power sources, it would be a major achievement if final agreement could be reached in time for adoption of the principles by the General Assembly this year.

The Legal Sub-Committee also reconvened its Working Group on the Definition and Delimitation of Outer Space and the Character and Utilization of the Geostationary Orbit, ably chaired by Mr. Estanislao Zawels of Argentina. In this Working Group, some delegations reiterated the need for a clear legal distinction between air space, characterized by State sovereignty and territorial integrity and security, and outer space, which is open for free exploration and use by all countries.

(The Chairman)

Other delegations, however, again found no need to establish any boundary to promoting the peaceful exploration of outer space. Delegations also maintained divergent views on the need for a unique legal régime for the use of the geostationary orbit.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/46, the Legal Sub-Committee again considered its newest agenda item on the legal aspects related to the application of the principle that the exploration and utilization of outer space should be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all States, taking into particular account the needs of developing countries. For its work on this item the Sub-Committee had before it replies from Member States to two notes verbales from the Secretary-General requesting Member States to provide views and information relating to priority subjects, to national legal frameworks and to relevant international agreements. Although the work on this item has just begun, it signifies the continuing role of the United Nations in developing international space law and in ensuring that the access to and the benefits, understanding and utilization of outer space and its technologies are made available to all mankind.

The Sub-Committee this year, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/46, established a Working Group on this item that will begin work at the next session of the Sub-Committee. I am pleased to note that Mr. Raimundo Gonzalez of Chile was elected Chairman of the new Working Group. During the consideration of this item in the Sub-Committee this year several ideas were put forward which might provide a basis for further discussion and progress during the current session of the Committee and allow the Working Group to work meaningfully next year.

Indeed - and this does not relate only to the new item - the further development of space law, bringing the rule of law to outer space, will continue to be one of the major challenges before the Committee. Space-faring nations are now well advanced in their plans to build the first permanent space stations, to return

(The Chairman)

to the Moon, perhaps on a permanent basis, and to go on to Mars. These new space ventures will require initiatives for co-ordinated legal provisions for the Moon and legal norms realistically tailored for the conquest of Mars. Attention might also be focused on the legal and technical challenges created by asteroids.

As one of the leading space lawyers of the host country, the United States, and, indeed, of the international space community, Ms. Eilene Galloway, recently suggested in a much-noted article in the Space News Journal:

> "Action might be needed on the puzzling situation created by the fact that there is broad international agreement on some basic principles for exploring and using the Moon and Mars, but a different Moon agreement has been added with the barest minimum of support."

There might be a case, therefore, for scientists and engineers to get together early with lawyers who are working on national and international legal problems created by space activities. Otherwise, a situation might arise where the scientists and engineers propose plans that violate adopted space laws and the lawyers might suggest procedures that are not technologically feasible. The Moon and Mars missions are multidisciplinary, and each discipline must contribute that degree of knowledge essential for clean interfaces of co-operation, order and safety.

In this regard let me also point to the 1994 Review Conference for the Moon agreement with a view to permit maximum international co-operation for the peaceful exploration of that particularly interesting celestial body. That review might perhaps focus attention on the question of whether legal provisions formulated for the Moon can be assumed really to apply automatically to Mars, just because it is another of the celestial bodies, or whether it could be appropriate to draft a treaty specifically for Mars. Those are just some of the questions we might have to face.

(The Chairman)

Regarding the other items on the agenda before the Committee, the implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, UNISPACE 82, has already been mentioned in connection with the Space Applications Programme. Let me also remind the Committee that we are to continue consideration of the agenda item introduced last year, entitled "Spin-off benefits of space technology: review of current status". I hope that many delegations will benefit, as in the past, from information presented during our consideration of that item.

In concluding, let me say that while the subsidiary bodies of the Committee made some substantive progress on some issues, in particular on the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, concrete results are still rather limited in other areas of the work of the Committee. Let us therefore not forget that the Committee carries enormous responsibilities in promoting international co-operation in the peaceful exploration and uses of outer space, since it remains the only body in the United Nations that deals exclusively with outer space matters.

As we are meeting the day after a truly historic summit meeting between the Presidents of the United States and the Soviet Union, it is perhaps appropriate to speculate for a moment on the new opportunities for space co-operation that this new and unprecedented relationship between the two major space Powers might open. The time has now come to think, no longer in terms of rivalry and competition, but in the spirit that has always been suggested by the immensity of the tasks set out by the peaceful conquest of outer space. We might therefore hope that designing and operating new space ventures, co-ordination and co-operation will henceforth be the order of the day, be it the establishment of new space stations, applications such as satellite communications, broadcasting, environmental monitoring - all are expensive and complex technologies that require much more international sharing of know-how, costs and benefits.

(The Chairman)

Finally, while pleased with the spectacular development in East-West relations, especially over the past year, we in the Committee must not forget that the most urgent need for economic and social development remains in the developing areas of the world, in Latin America, Africa and Asia. The increase in East-West co-operation between developed countries, much as it is to be welcomed, must not be at the expense of North-South co-operation between developed and developing countries, but should provide the basis, a new and more fruitful and productive basis, for increased global co-operation and increased concern for the welfare of all mankind.

Let us work in this spirit. Let us work in the context of all these new challenges and opportunities. I am sure that the Committee will then make once again an important contribution to the work of the United Nations.

Before turning to the other items on the agenda, I should like to draw the Committee's attention to the question of the succession in the Vice-Chairmanship of the Committee. As members are aware, the former Vice-Chairman, Ambassador Petre Tanasie, left New York a few months ago, relinquishing his duties at the United Nations and as Vice-Chairman of the Committee. I have the pleasure to announce that the delegation of Romania has informed the Committee that Mr. Aurel Dragos Munteanu, the new Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary with the Permanent Mission of Romania to the United Nations, would be honoured to serve as Vice-Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. It is my understanding that delegations, after consultations, wish to elect Mr. Munteanu as the new Vice-Chairman, and if I hear no objection, I shall take it that such is the case.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to take this opportunity to offer the new Vice-Chairman my congratulations and those of the entire Committee and to welcome him warmly. I invite him to join the other officers on the rostrum.

(The Chairman)

Let me also take this opportunity to express, through Ambassador Munteanu, our appreciation of the excellent work his predecessor, Ambassador Tanasie, made to the smooth functioning of the Committee.

I wish also to welcome the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Security Council Affairs, Mr. Vasiliy Safronchuk, who has been associated with the work of the Committee for many years.

ATTENDANCE BY NON-MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to inform members that we have received notes verbales from the Permanent Representatives of Greece, Malaysia, Peru and Spain and the Permanent Observer of Switzerland in which they request permission to attend the current session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space as observers. I should therefore like to suggest that, in conformity with past practice, we invite the delegations of those countries to attend the current session of the Committee and to address the Committee as appropriate. This is, of course, without prejudice to further requests of this nature and does not involve any decision by the Committee concerning status; it is a courtesy we customarily extend to delegations.

If there is no objection, we shall proceed accordingly.

It was so decided.

STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY OF THE COMMITTEE

The CHAIRMAN: I invite the Secretary of the Committee to make a statement.

Mr. JASENTULIYANA (Secretary of the Committee): In response to views expressed by delegations at past sessions of the Committee, I should like to offer a brief review of the work of the Outer Space Affairs Division over the past year, and of the documents that are before the Committee.

(Mr. Jasentuliyana)

As a result of the retrenchment programme, through which the United Nations Secretariat staff is being reduced by 15 per cent, the Outer Space Affairs Division is losing two posts as of this year: one General Service post and one Professional post. In accordance with the priorities expressed by members of the Committee, the staff exclusively dedicated to the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and to the implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82) will be maintained, and the post reductions will be applied to the Committee Services, Reports and Research Section. While this will impose an additional burden on the remaining staff and will necessarily somewhat reduce the responsiveness of the Division to requests for services from Member States, the essential services to the Committee and its Sub-Committees will be assured. The increasing use of computers for office automation and information processing is enabling the Division to improve its information services, which should allow the Division to maintain its overall productivity despite the cuts.

I believe that the effectiveness of the Division in promoting the peaceful uses of outer space and in responding to requests from Member States is limited more by financial and technical resources than by personnel, especially in the activities of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and the implementation of the UNISPACE 82 recommendations. As I have noted in the past, all Division staff members support the Programme on Space Applications as required. I should also note that all the financial resources available to the Division are devoted to the Programme on Space Applications and that the regular budget allocations for the Programme have remained at the same level for the past 10 years.

If further financial and technical resources were to be made available, the Division, with its current level of staffing, would be able to provide further

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support for education, training and technical advisory services for the benefit of developing countries. The needs and priorities of developing countries for further assistance have been described in the report of the UNISPACE 82 Conference, in the survey of the needs of developing countries presented in documents A/AC.105/L.137 and L.141 to L.144, and in the reports of the meetings held under the Programme on Space Applications, which have been submitted to the Committee.

The Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee considered the reports on the 1989 activities of the Programme on Space Applications (A/AC.105/436 to 442) and the programme for 1990 and the proposals for 1991 in the report of the Expert on Space Applications (A/AC.105/446). The staff of the Division has made great efforts to ensure the effective planning and organization of those activities, and I should like particularly to acknowledge the hard work done by the Expert on Space Applications, Mr. Abiodun, in co-ordinating the programme.

As part of its efforts to provide assistance to Member States on request and to support regional co-operation, in March of this year, in response to a request from the Government of Costa Rica to the Secretary-General, the Division provided assistance to Costa Rica in the organization of the Space Conference of the Americas: Prospects of Co-operation for Development. In particular, the Outer Space Affairs Division organized and participated in a special session for organizations of the United Nations system to discuss possible programmes that could be undertaken for the Americas. The Division will also provide support, on request, for the follow-up activities of that Conference.

An important priority for the Division, and particularly for the Programme on Space Applications, over the next two and a half years will be the activities organized as part of the International Space Year in 1992. The year 1992, of course, also marks the tenth anniversary of the UNISPACE 82 Conference, which called for a reorientation and expansion of the Programme on Space Applications for

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the benefit of developing countries. Members may recall that the General Assembly last year endorsed the Committee's recommendation that the United Nations, through the Programme on Space Applications, should play a meaningful role in the International Space Year through voluntary contributions by Member States and without any impact on the regular budget or the existing programme of work.

The Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee considered the proposed programme for the participation of the United Nations in the International Space Year (ISY) presented in document A/AC.105/445. This programme is based on proposals by Member States and on the Committee's recommendation that the activities should make use of the training and educational capabilities of the Programme on Space Applications. The United Nations activities for the International Space Year are particularly designed to promote the participation of developing countries in the Year.

Discussions are continuing with Member States and interested international organizations further to develop and implement the programme. While some of the proposed activities are based on voluntary contributions already offered by Member States, the European Space Agency (ESA) and the International Telecommunications Satellite Organization (INTELSAT), additional contributions will be required if other proposed activities are to be realized.

We are in contact with other Member States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to explore further possibilities for carrying out the proposed activities on the basis of voluntary contributions. We are also in contact with the Japanese Mission to the United Nations concerning possible staff support, as a voluntary contribution, for ISY activities. Plans for a number of other actions, including the issuance of a United Nations commemorative stamp and the organization of an exhibit in the public lobby of the General Assembly building, are being developed as a part of other ongoing United Nations functions. We will keep Member States informed of further plans as they develop.

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I would also note that, as the Chairman noted, in 1992 there will be a United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, hosted by the Government of Brazil. In the light of the similarity between the topic of the Conference and the theme of the International Space Year - Mission to Planet Earth - the Division will be following the preparations for the Conference to ensure that the United Nations ISY activities complement the work of the Conference and do not duplicate it.

An area in which the Division has been working to provide additional services to Member States has been the International Space Information Service. The establishment of the Service was recommended by the UNISPACE 82 Conference and decided upon by the General Assembly in its resolution 37/90 of 1982. Owing to a lack of resources, however, rather limited progress has been possible towards the implementation of the Service. The Division is now in the process of developing a modest computer information processing capability with the objective of improving our ability to respond to requests for information from Member States.

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As part of the work of the Division in developing the International Space Information System, we have published and distributed a number of documents relating to space applications for development. This year, for the first time, we published, in document A/AC.105/443, a collection of selected papers from the seminars, workshops and training courses organized as part of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications held during the past year. The papers in that collection were selected primarily on the basis of their general interest to developing countries. We are now beginning the preparation of a similar volume for 1990, and we plan to publish such a collection annually. We hope that the series can make a significant contribution to the need, identified by the UNISPACE 82 Conference and mentioned several times in the Sub-Committee and the Committee, for improvements in the exchange of information concerning space applications in and for developing countries.

For several years now, we have been co-operating with the Indian Ocean Marine Affairs Co-operation Programme with a view to promoting the use of space technology for marine development. As part of that effort and with the assistance of external information systems, we compiled a bibliography on space technology applications to marine resources and distributed it to the concerned agencies in the Indian Ocean region. We also assisted in preparing for publication the proceedings of the United Nations sponsored Indian Ocean Regional Workshop on Oceanographic and Marine Space Information Systems held in Karachi last year in co-operation with the Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) of Pakistan.

Also as part of the International Space Information Service and of the ongoing effort to improve the access of people from developing countries to space-related education and training, the Division last year prepared a Directory of Education, Training, Research and Fellowship Opportunities in Space Science, Technology and Applications. An addendum to that Directory is being distributed during the

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current session of the Committee, in document A/AC.105/432/Add.1, and a new integrated version will be published in time for International Space Year, in 1992.

The Directory of Information Systems on Space Science and Technology, first published in 1987, was updated this year through the publication of document A/AC.105/397/Rev.1/Add.1, and an integrated and revised version of the Directory will be prepared for 1991. In response to a request from the Working Group of the Whole, and in order to facilitate the exchange of consultants at the international level, the Division has now compiled, with the assistance of Member States, a list of experts in space technology and applications. That publication is being distributed during the current session of the Committee, in document A/AC.105/460.

In addition to these documents prepared as part of the International Space Information Service, the Division in the past year prepared a number of other documents in response to requests from the Working Group of the Whole of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee. The Division prepared a survey of regional and international education, training and research centres in space science, technology and applications, in document A/AC.105/450; a survey of United Nations activities related to space applications, in document A/AC.105/454; and a review of the implementation of UNISPACE 82 recommendations addressed to the United Nations, in document A/AC.105/451. That review indicated that the United Nations has made efforts to implement, at least in part, virtually all of the recommendations addressed to it, but that many of the recommendations have not been fully implemented due to the limited resources available to the United Nations for that purpose.

This year, as in previous years, Member States submitted to the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee and the Committee, reports and information concerning national space activities. These included information submitted in response to

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requests from the Working Group of the Whole of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee and annual reports on national activities. Information on space activities that could be the subject of greater international co-operation and on techniques resulting from medical studies carried out in outer space, received from Member States in response to a similar request from the Working Group, was also submitted to the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, in document A/AC.105/448 and its addenda 1 to 3. A number of annual reports from Member States are before the Committee, in document A/AC.105/458, part of a long series of annual reviews of national and international space activities.

Annual reports on the space activities of Member States were specifically requested by the Committee and the General Assembly for many years in the 1960s and early 1970s, most recently by the General Assembly in 1973 in resolution 3182 (XXVIII), and by the Committee in the report of its 1974 session. During that period and for some years after, the Secretariat sent annual invitations to Member States inviting them to submit national reports, and reports were received from 35 to 40 countries each year. In 1981, a request for annual reports was not sent, but Member States were invited to submit national papers for the UNISPACE 82 Conference. Following UNISPACE 82, no further invitations to submit annual reports were sent, but six or seven States have continued to submit reports on their activities each year.

The reports and information received from Member States and published by the Secretariat have provided useful resources to Member States, the Secretariat, and researchers interested in space activities in various countries. The Committee might wish to consider resuming the practice of inviting Member States to submit annual reports. To avoid duplication of effort, information on specific topics requested from Member States by the Committee or its subsidiary bodies could be included in special sections of these annual reports. That could include, for

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example, the requests from the Working Group of the Whole for reports on space activities that could be the subject of greater international co-operation, and on techniques resulting from medical studies carried out in outer space.

On the other hand, information received from international organizations in response to requests from the Committee and its subsidiary bodies might continue to be published as separate documents, since annual reports from those organizations are generally not produced specially for the Committee and are circulated without translation.

During this year's session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) and the International Astronautical Federation (IAF) organized a Symposium on the Use of Space Technology in Terrestrial Search and Rescue and in Disaster Relief Activities, and COSPAR arranged a special presentation on progress in the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme. A number of Member States and international organizations also arranged special presentations on the special theme or on other agenda items.

Recognizing that those presentations contained much interesting and valuable information on the latest developments in space applications of interest to the international community, the Division again prepared a summary of those presentations that is being distributed at the current session of the Committee, in document A/AC.105/459. I should like to take this opportunity to express the Division's appreciation of the great efforts that have been made by IAF and COSPAR to obtain the services of interesting and knowledgeable speakers for the Symposium.

Currently planned for the present session of the Committee are technical presentations by France, the USSR and the United States on the practical applications of remote sensing and on the development of meteorological satellites.

With respect to long-term programme planning, the proposed United Nations medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 was recently considered by the Committee

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for Programme and Co-ordination. At last years's session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the Secretariat submitted for comments the draft text of the medium-term plan relating to the peaceful uses of outer space, in document A/AC.105/1989/CRP.1, in accordance with the procedures for the preparation of the plan and with requests expressed by Member States in this Committee. The comments on that draft plan, as indicated in the Committee's report on last year's session, document A/44/20, paragraphs 119 and 120, were submitted by the Outer Space Affairs Division to the Budget Division for use in revising the draft medium-term plan.

Subsequently, however, the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination decided substantially to change the structure of the medium-term plan. The plan was therefore redrafted by the Budget Division in accordance with the decision of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and on the basis of the information in the earlier draft version and comments made on it by Member States, including the comments of delegations in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space last year. The part of the new proposed plan relating to the peaceful uses of outer space, contained in document A/45/6 (Prog. 8), came up for consideration in the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination last week, and a number of minor amendments were made by that Committee in consultation with the Outer Space Affairs Division and the Budget Division. The revised text, as approved by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, will be submitted to the General Assembly for approval later this year.

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I should like to complete this review of the work of the Division by mentioning the Division's co-operation with other international organizations. The co-ordination of space activities within the United Nations system is carried out through the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities. The 1989 session of that Meeting took place at the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in Geneva in September, and its report (A/AC.105/444) was submitted to the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee. The Meeting serves for the exchange of information on planned space-related activities in order to prevent redundant or conflicting activities and for the planning of joint and complementary activities, including activities to be organized in the next two years as part of International Space Year. I might mention that co-operation between the Division and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in the area of remote sensing has been particularly close. The Inter-Agency Meeting for 1990 will be held at FAO headquarters in Rome in September.

Concerning co-operation with non-governmental organizations, I should like particularly to express the Division's appreciation for the support provided by the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) and the International Aeronautics Federation (IAF). The annual reports on space technology and space research in documents A/AC.105/452 and 453 were submitted to the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, and were prepared in consultation with COSPAR and IAF. These reports were prepared with the assistance of many international experts and constitute authoritative and up-to-date reviews of the most important developments in this field.

I would also mention that the annual Congresses of the IAF and the biennial meetings of COSPAR include sessions organized in co-operation with the United Nations on topics of particular interest to developing countries. During the 1990 COSPAR meeting to be held at The Hague later this month and in early July, the COSPAR Panel on Space Research in Developing Countries is organizing, with the

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United Nations as co-sponsor, a session on equatorial electrojet and related phenomena, a topic of particular interest to scientists from equatorial countries. At the 1990 IAF Congress, to be held at Dresden in October, a special session on space and forest management will be organized by the IAF Committee for Liaison with International Organizations and Developing Nations. And, for the 1991 IAF Congress to be held in Montreal, the Division is co-operating in the planning of a workshop on space applications for development. In each of these meetings the United Nations will be providing assistance to support the participation of a number of scientists from developing countries. The Division will also co-operate with COSPAR and IAF in organizing workshops focusing on the needs of developing countries as part of the joint COSPAR-IAF Congress to be held in Washington in 1992 in the context of International Space Year.

The Division has also enjoyed close co-operation with the European Space Agency, and I would particularly like to express our appreciation to Mr. Jean Arets and Ms. Karin Barbance of ESA's International Affairs Division. I would also like to mention the support for the Division's activities provided by Inmarsat and Intelsat and the support that has been offered by Intersputnik.

The Committee has over the years granted observer status to a number of intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations. Seven such organizations currently have observer status with the Committee. The Committee has recently received requests for observer status from two additional non-governmental organizations, the International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing and the International Law Association. It was suggested last year that the Committee might consider guidelines for granting observer status to international organizations.

For the information of delegations, the Division has prepared some notes on the practices of United Nations bodies on the granting of observer status. The

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most well-defined procedures are those of the Economic and Social Council for establishing consultative arrangements with non-governmental organizations, and those arrangements have been used by other United Nations bodies, including the subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly. Information on this question is contained in the note that will be made available along with the text of this statement.

This has been a very brief review of the work of the Outer Space Affairs Division over the past year. As always, the staff of the Division stands ready to assist the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies in their role in promoting international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space and the applications of space technology in the developing countries.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

The CHAIRMAN: The first speaker in the general exchange of views is the representative of Chile, on whom I now call.

Mr. GONZALEZ (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. Chairman, my delegation is particularly pleased to see you once again presiding over the work of this important Committee. As always, we will make every effort to contribute to the success of your important endeavours. We also wish to thank you for your very important and detailed statement, which contained many elements that will certainly facilitate our discussions.

At the outset it must be pointed out that this may well be the first time since the creation of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space that we have felt such an obviously relaxed atmosphere in international relations, which in due course can lead to certain achievements with regard to this subject and establish certain bases for the establishment of a correlation between space activities and the underlying doctrine, which is that outer space should be used for peaceful purposes and the benefit of mankind.

(Mr. Gonzalez, Chile)

This is a special session also because there have been several important events in the scientific and technical sphere . The first relates to the Cosmic Background Explorer (COBE), a device launched in November 1989 which is just beginning to bear fruit. Indeed the initial results are likely to make the so-called Great Attractor theory more probable; it has also helped in the discovery of the double quasar; and we are now beginning to doubt that the Milky Way is a truly spiral galaxy. Another important event is the placing in orbit of the Hubble Telescope, which no doubt will expand the frontiers of knowledge of outer space. All of this certainly lends greater impetus to our work.

This session is special also because of the international relaxation of tensions, which offers the possibility of future joint space ventures by various super-Powers. We hope that this positive climate will also help us ensure that we need not repeat what we have repeated so often in the past: that the work of this Committee must be carried out so as to give proper priority to the economic, social and developmental problems of third-world countries and ensure that the technology now available is made available to them and adjusted to their political, economic, social and cultural activities.

While we have the greatest admiration for the amazing technological achievements that have taken place in this area, we must emphasize that in all likelihood most of them will not have an immediate impact on the solution of our problems. We therefore continue to advocate the adoption of a set of international rules and regulations commensurate with our legitimate needs and inherent rights.

Various specific circumstances make us feel some moderate, relative optimism with regard to 1992, an important year for space.

(Mr. Gonzalez, Chile)

As regards agenda item 4, "Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes", we are convinced that we now have an opportunity to do constructive work, particularly in the light of the results of the Committee's thirty-second session, when for the first time it was possible to achieve a consensus formulation on the subject. That agreement specifically recognized the fact that the principles of international law must be respected, and it drew special attention to the dangers involved in the arms race. The most important of the principles to which I refer is to be found in paragraph 4 of article 2 of the Charter, concerning the prohibition of the threat or use of force. Its subsequent development in resolution 2625 (XXV) of 1970 gives it the character of a mandatory general norm of international law, or jus cogens, which therefore cannot be modified, except by another similar norm.

Furthermore, the reference in article III of the 1967 space Treaty to the United Nations Charter and international law is a clear link with the principles I have mentioned, as it recognizes that they apply specifically to space activities.

We understand that there will be no major difficulty in adopting the report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, the subject of agenda item 5. Nevertheless, it is important that the Committee support the report of the Working Group that evaluated implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82) and that it establish the natural correlation between those technical recommendations and the substantive aspects of the new legal item on the benefits of space activities.

The recommendations of UNISPACE 82 are of particular relevance to the interests of the developing countries, and in this context this Committee must give them the necessary impetus and political follow-up so that the drafts or studies recommended by the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee may be fully implemented.

(Mr. Gonzalez, Chile)

On the same lines, we are very concerned about the precarious financial situation of the Programme on Space Applications, whose reduced budget is having an adverse effect on the efficiency of its work.

Under agenda item 6, "Report of the Legal Sub-Committee", my delegation is concerned about, among other things, the question of nuclear power sources in outer space, an issue on which there has been progress recently. My delegation hopes that this Committee will regard favourably principle 3, "Guidelines and criteria for safe use" adopted at the last meeting of the Legal Sub-Committee, held in Geneva.

In the same context, with regard to the question of the delimitation of space and the geostationary orbit, we hope that the Committee will urge the parties involved to spare no effort to make possible progress on an issue that cannot continue to be permanently blocked or hampered by radical positions. It was precisely in that positive spirit that our delegation recently raised in Geneva the possibility of the Secretariat's preparing a factual study on the subject, which would make it possible to analyse the difficulties and the possibilities of reviewing the subject, in the light of new circumstances and elements such as equitable access to the orbit.

On this subject, my delegation would also like to express its appreciation of the very energetic, useful and constructive way in which the Argentine representative, Mr. Estanislao Zawels led the Working Group on the geostationary orbit. We and other delegations highly valued those efforts, which we believe may serve as the basis for progress on the subject in the near future.

Furthermore, my delegation is ready to promote all forms of contact and to take all the necessary steps with regard to the item on the benefits of space activities to begin to establish the procedures and appropriate foundations for

(Mr. Gonzalez, Chile)

negotiation, on which a substantive debate will take place next year in the Legal Sub-Committee. We believe that it is already necessary to begin setting up a procedural and substantive framework to facilitate efforts on the subject, since it is the key item in the Committee's future work, and bearing in mind that a Working Group on the subject should give its views on the matter.

Finally, with regard to agenda item 8, "Spin-off benefits of space technology", my delegation is particularly interested in the contributions that can be made by the developed countries, since they can result in guidance of great scientific and technical interest to extend the benefits of such activities to all mankind.

Those are our comments in the general exchange of views, which we make without prejudice to our opportunity to make specific contributions on other agenda items.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on Mr. George Ohring of the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR).

Mr. OHRING (Committee on Space Research (COSPAR)): Our Committee expresses its greetings and the regrets of our President, Professor W. I. Axford, who is not able to attend in person.

We also express our appreciation for the opportunity to co-operate with the United Nations and to respond to its request for preparation of specific studies, in particular, the yearly report on progress in space research. The last such report (A/AC.105/425) was made in 1988-1989 and was submitted to the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee at its last session.

We were pleased to organize, together with the International Astronautical Federation (IAF), specialized symposiums such as the ones we had during the last session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee on the "Use of Space Technology in Terrestrial Search and Rescue and in Disaster Relief Activities". In

(Mr. Ohring, COSPAR)

addition, we gave a special presentation, together with the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) Committee on the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP).

COSPAR has taken note of the new item proposed for the 1991 symposium at the twenty-eighth session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, "Applications of airborne and satellite remote sensing for prospecting mineral and ground-water resources and for monitoring and managing biological resources, with emphasis on agriculture, taking into particular account the needs of developing countries". We shall work closely with the IAF to prepare a symposium on those subjects.

Our Committee noted the General Assembly's endorsement of the initiative to designate 1992 as International Space Year (ISY) and the recommendations of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to promote international co-operation during the Year. COSPAR is in the process of forming a panel of space science experts that will come forward with its proposals regarding scientific initiatives for ISY.

The World Space Congress will take place in Washington, D.C. from 28 August to 9 September 1992. The biggest event of its kind ever held, it will include the regular COSPAR plenary meeting, with scientific activities, as well as the IAF Conference. We believe that the Space Congress will be an important contribution to the celebration of the ISY.

(Mr. Ohring, COSPAR)

In about three weeks, COSPAR will be holding its 28th plenary meeting and associated activities. It will include over 60 scientific events and will be the biggest COSPAR meeting held so far with over 2,000 papers presented and approximately the same number of participants. One of the events scheduled, MP.2, "Equatorial Electrojet and Related Phenomena", was organized in co-operation with the United Nations. Our Committee is especially grateful to the Outer Space Affairs Division for their support and, in particular, wishes to thank them for their part in enabling some scientists from developing countries to attend the COSPAR meeting in The Hague.

Our Committee wishes the Chairman and members fruitful deliberations.

Mr. KHABIROV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I do not have a statement to make, but I do wish to put a small question. In his statement, the Secretary of the Committee mentioned the request from two international organizations for the granting of observer status. Are we supposed to take a decision on this matter?

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee will take a decision on this matter under the agenda item on "Other matters", as proposed in the comments to the agenda. I would refer the Soviet representative to document A/AC.105/L.184/Add.2, page 7. We shall discuss other matters, including the requests from the International Law Association (ILA) and the International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS) for observer status in the Committee.

Mr. KHABIROV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I have one other small question. Mr. Chairman, you rightly referred to the importance of the question of the legal aspects of the exploration of space and the use of nuclear power sources in space. You have also talked about the possibility of using the data from this session for these purposes. The Legal

(Mr. Khabirov, USSR)

Sub-Committee at its last session decided to hold consultations on nuclear power sources in space during the first week of this session of the Committee. We have a question for the Secretary in this connection. When and how is it intended that these consultations should take place and does the Secretariat intend to get involved in the solution of this question?

The CHAIRMAN: I understand that, on the basis of consultations which have been conducted among delegations, time has tentatively been set for informal consultations on this specific question for Wednesday afternoon. That has to be confirmed. So there will be occasion to act on this recommendation of the Legal Sub-Committee.

I suggest that, in order to help delegations decide on when they would like to speak, we close the list of speakers on agenda item 3 tomorrow, Tuesday, at 12 noon.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.